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# The identification of criteria essential for the promotion of housekeepers: a pilot study

Natalie Daniels Smith

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THE IDENTIFICATION OF CRITERIA ESSENTIAL  
FOR THE PROMOTION OF HOUSEKEEPERS:  
A PILOT STUDY

by

Natalie Daniels Smith

A project submitted to the  
Faculty of the School of Food, Hotel and Travel Management  
at  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree  
of  
Master of Science

August 15, 1992

**ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**  
**School of Food, Hotel and Travel Management**  
**Department of Graduate Studies**

**M.S. Hospitality-Tourism Management**  
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Title of Research: The Identification of Criteria Essential For The  
Promotion of Housekeepers: A Pilot Study

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## ABSTRACT

The motivation and concentration for this research was partially funded by Commonwealth College of Virginia Beach, Virginia to help in the fulfillment of that college's mission: To serve the needs of it's students and it's community by providing quality collegiate Educational programs in careers with positive impact on it's society and environment. The issue of Housekeeping manpower is a primary concern of Hoteliers and a constant human resource need. This research project was designed to illicit primary data from area convention hotels to determine where the need for training exists germane to entry-level and mid-management positions in housekeeping.

The results of the research conducted will be shared with the General Managers and Executive Housekeepers of the participating hotels surveyed and used as a basis to develop training courses and or programs conducted through Commonwealth College's Tourism/Hospitality division. The goal of those programs or courses will be to produce quality trained housekeeping managers and supervisors. Commonwealth College is a 'specialty training' institution that provides career education and training advancement courses for 'adult learners' who are non-traditional college students.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

When you do something in this world, you've done something. I've done this and it was something. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Thank you Lord.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### **Introduction**

The development of training programs in the Hospitality industry in housekeeping, often address, sporadically, needs such as Guest Satisfaction, Time Management and effective Customer Service skills. The emphasis of the industry on Empowerment and service generally does not initiate with the Housekeeping department, which, ultimately, is the most affected area where 'guest contact' occurs most frequently after leaving the front desk area.

The image of housekeeping is poor to say the least. However, General Managers and text books state implicitly that without housekeepers the hotel would be out of business within hours.

Manpower implications are that housekeeping is not a professional career choice and people who work in this capacity are historically lower class individuals, under educated, non-achievers from minority groups who are forced for one reason or another into the 'job' of housekeeper. A position that will suffice until 'real' employment can be found. The look on the face of most housekeepers conducting their daily routine is not one of subliminal bliss. If housekeepers 'felt better' about their skills and their positions, would a manpower shortage exist? If housekeeping professional advancement opportunities were promoted (advertised), would more

housekeepers turn their 'jobs' into careers? Would they undertake training to insure promotional advancement?

### **Statement of Problem**

What kind of Training program can Commonwealth College create to service the Hotel industry in Virginia Beach to enhance the skills of Housekeepers so that they will become eligible for advancement? Housekeeping is a **Career position** that is rarely addressed, yet it continues to be one of the most often advertised positions in area newspapers. Labor shortages in housekeeping affect every hotelier in Tidewater who collectively offer over 10,500 rooms. Yet no training program for housekeepers skill enhancement exist in the Tidewater area. Many General Managers and Executive Housekeepers are forced to hire employees with limited verbal skills that are in need of immediate and long term training in order to function in this operationally crucial position. People just are not attracted to housekeeping as a career, yet the demand is ever constant and global. An image problem exists about housekeeping. A image problem that affects incumbents as well as applicants.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to uncover the promotion criteria of housekeepers as viewed by General Managers, Executive Housekeepers and housekeepers. To analyze that data as established by the industry and to create a

revenue generating program, custom designed for hospitality housekeeping to prepare housekeeping staffs to accept additional responsibilities through advancement or cross training, thus impacting customer service, empowerment, position image and retention.

Robert B. Reich stated in his article Metamorphosis of the American Worker, that Corporations contribute less to public schools and more to the colleges and Universities of their senior executives, and that few of tomorrow's workers will further their education in those schools. The U.S economy is entering a phase of restructuring which will call for an increasing focus on job training and retraining due to the fact that as the economy moves into the information age, workers will need to move into positions within the service sector. The new jobs in the service industry will demand much higher skill levels, and will create all of the new jobs and most of the wealth over the next 13 years. The educational preparation of workers will demand that the standards in our educational system be raised.

Public funding of education in Virginia has been drastically cut, making private education more affordable and public post secondary school performance less acceptable. More national emphasis has been placed on Junior Colleges and or two year career education as being the acceptable minimum for career positions . The hospitality industry is the second largest industry in the SMSA of Virginia Beach, with the Navy being the first. Both of which present a textbook case for creative and

aggressive target marketing to capture both target markets, hospitality et al and relocation workers who are flexible and adaptable.

The human resource management projections for the 90's indicate that the Hospitality program of Commonwealth College can be impacted financially. The jobs in Virginia Beach will be education and skill intensive. The time of empowerment for hotel workers will definitely require skill as well as finesse. The current demographic and economic trends in Virginia Beach will force hotel and restaurant owners to take an active role in developing and training their labor pools in the job market and in their businesses. "Education and training are paramount to maintaining a work force capable of the productivity necessary to remain competitive" (Reich, 1991).

### **Significance of Study**

A training deficit exist in housekeeping advancement. The hotel industry which is the second largest employer in the Virginia Beach area is in need of image enhancement and recruitment sources for qualified promotable housekeepers with training abilities. A need can be met on a two fold basis: 1) Industry's human resource needs. 2) The mission of Commonwealth College can be extended to address a particular labor shortage through training, thereby bridging the gap between education and industry. The concentration of this study and subsequent creation of a training program will increase student enrollment and introduce the

community (industry) to the College's function in the work world in the Virginia Beach area, which offers over 10,500 hotel rooms in a tourist destination city. Virginia Beach hosts more than 2,500,000 visitors annually and grossed \$43.7 million in revenue in 1990-91. \$1.75 million was paid to the city in tax revenue and this industry employs 12,000 full-time and 9,000 part-time summer workers.

In an address to Master's degree students, Dr. Fran Domoy, Director of the School of Food, Hotel and Travel of RIT delineated ten obstacles to Tourism Development as they related to the infrastructure of a city. Two of those points are germane here. As cited "there often exist a misunderstanding of the 'true' economics of the Hospitality industry by the community involved (agglomeration) and that lack of understanding is reflected in the labor market where tourism jobs are viewed as second rate when compared to other industries. Factors or barriers that impede progress in our industry also stagnate educational systems that service and train employees in the Hospitality fields.

### **Hypothesis**

Traditionally, poorly educated, older female applicants are hired as housekeepers with no intention or methods established to create or identify their promotable or empowerment skills. Housekeeping has long been viewed as a necessary, nasty job and has been denied recognition or marketing efforts necessary to attract an 'upper level' applicant. The understated philosophy that it's subservient

often leads to a way of thinking within the work place. The assumption that housekeepers themselves also view their position negatively gives way to their thinking that their jobs are dead end with terminally low pay. That same negative thinking can affect a housekeeper's attitude when moving about the back of the house, the area where the guest have come to sleep. Empowerment and guest service must include housekeepers.

### **Scope and Limitations**

With over 60 hotels in the immediate Virginia Beach area, the feasibility study was begun with some parameters. The survey group selected was Convention properties. The rationale was that conference properties would be impacted the greatest since they cater primarily to business groups. Seventeen convention properties were identified and surveys were constructed and mailed to the General Managers and Executive Housekeepers to elicit their criteria for housekeeper promotion and to request their support in surveying the housekeepers on staff. The assumption was made that there is a niche market for Commonwealth College to capture. The limitations that could affect the outcome of the study were of a dual nature: 1) There might not be enough interest to support the study or its outcome (program development). 2) Maybe the managers really don't care about their housekeeping department's image or promotional opportunities, only whether or not they show up to clean rooms. In the event that the survey hotels did not respond in number, a Focus group was selected to use as a backup. That Focus group contained

(5) members; (2) housekeepers who are college students, (1) Housekeeping supervisor, also a college student, (1) General Manager and (1) Houseman.

### **Definition of Terms**

1. **At-Risk Student:** Generally defined as 'adult learners' are non-traditional college students who return to the educational system after a long absence. These students prefer to attend classes with older, more mature students who generally are members of the working class.
2. **Promotable Skills:** Qualities necessary to advance to the next salaried position within a department after having met all the established criteria for work performance.
3. **At Risk Student:** Person that requires alternative methods of teaching due to established learning patterns.
4. **Empowerment:** Ability to interact with guest without fear of retaliation of management, to satisfy guest needs if within scope of position.
5. **Agglomeration:** many factors clustered together. Several socioeconomic components that influence the labor market.
6. **Career Positions:** A chosen profession or occupation with several specific progressive steps of increasing responsibility and wages.
7. **Enhancement:** Relating to job skills. The increasing of one's position abilities to increase their value as an employee and to gain higher wages.
8. **Hospitality:** The cordial and generous reception and entertainment of guests or strangers, either socially or commercially.



## CHAPTER TWO

### **Literature Review**

The literature review for this project was as complex as the relationship the study set out to explore. It was virtually impossible to deal with the issue without first understanding its components. Those components were narrowed into five general categories which were explored in depth. A basic definition of Hospitality and Housekeeping began the review, followed by a look at the Image of Housekeeping, the Education of Housekeepers, past and future, the necessity of Empowerment in Housekeeping and ended with an overview of Manpower and Human Resources Management projections. The intricate relationship of these five areas provided insight and supportive theory for the purpose of the study, to design a Housekeeping Skills Enhancement program that will increase the promotional abilities of entry-level management housekeepers.

Martin & Jones (1992) examined the relationship past and present of hospitality and choice. Just as ancient travelers were able to make a choice in accommodations, today's travelers make those same choices when deciding where to spend the night. Those decisions are based on locating a place where they can get the best food, clean facilities, a comfortable place to rest, and reasonable protection from the night elements. The criteria for lodging remains the basis for competition in the lodging industry. Housekeeping departments must be hospitable and make the traveler feel welcome and motivated to return again and again. The primary focus

of hospitality is incumbent upon each housekeeper as they carry out the daily functions of the housekeeping job. In addition to cleaning, the duties of the housekeeper have expanded to that of concern, pride, attitude and demeanor. Martin & Jones (1992), explained that over the last thirty years the profession of executive housekeeping has moved from an art to that of scientific management. Executive housekeepers now must combine skilled labor with planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling total housekeeping operations. These same employees are learning to meet new job demands such as inspiring others to display, on a daily basis, a concerned attitude that says to each customer, "Welcome, we are glad you chose to stay with us, we care about you and want your visit to be a memorable occasion. If anything is not satisfactory, let us know immediately and we will take care of it". Empowerment is the best approach when service delivery involves managing a relationship as opposed to simply performing a transaction. The service firm may want to establish relationships with customers to build loyalty or to get ideas for improving the service delivery system (Bowen & Lawler, 1992). Executive housekeepers must become knowledgeable of management practices and theories. Empowerment approaches require different types of managers and employees in order for it to work. Bowen & Lawler suggest the service companies need theory Y managers who believe that their employees can act independently to benefit both the organization and the customer. If the management is composed of theory X types who feel that employees (housekeepers) do their best only when supervised, then the organization will need to train its managers to show employees

how much their jobs matter to the organization's success. Routine work can be engaging if employees are convinced that it matters. There is no department within the hospitality industry that will provide such an opportunity to display and exercise the application of management skills and theories.

The tourism industry, lodging in particular, is forced by nature to examine the Motivations, Needs, and Expectations (MNE's) of their customers. From inception, our industry has had to be multi-skilled and responsive to our product -- the Customer. One can safely assume that we do that reasonably well. We operate with team knowledge that requires cross functionality.

The lodging industry is the third largest employer in the United States. What we have done, we have done well, yet we are still plagued by problems. Competition forces hotels to make 'service leadership' a competitive strength to capture the unnatural market share (Albrecht,1988). Many American corporations including hotels, manage and operate on manufacturing paradigms that, ignore one key component, the employee. Willis Harmon, President of the Institute of Noetic Sciences defines paradigm as "The basic way of perceiving, thinking, valuing, and doing, associated with a particular vision of reality. A dominant paradigm is seldom stated explicitly: It exists as unquestioned, tacit understanding that is transmitted through culture and to succeeding generations through direct experience rather than being taught". Housekeeping is viewed not only by the majority of the American

public as being at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy but within the hotel industry itself, housekeeping employees are among the lowest paid of all workers in the hotel.

Albrecht(1988) and Peters (1988) have suggested that corporations adopt new views about their employees and the effect that they have on the guest's perception of the hospitality organization. Overcoming the negative paradigm regarding housekeeping staffs is the greatest challenge facing the lodging industry today. Recruitment for the entry-level and mid-management level positions in housekeeping is difficult due to myths and perceptions that these jobs are negative and lack career paths, paradigms at work. Corporate cultures that reflect new ways of thinking must be adopted if the hospitality industry is to overcome it's problems of recruitment and retention Breiter (1991). The hospitality industry is no exception in the manpower plight of this country as we descend through the de-industrialization of our workforces. Service workers in general earn much less, have fewer benefits and have less job security. More and more each day working people believe that their company's pay scales and promotion systems are unfair, that as employees they are not informed of employment decisions that affect their lives and that management really doesn't care about their welfare and well-being (Mirvis & Kanter, 1991). These beliefs about business practices are shaping the attitudes of working people who are hired everyday. Harris polls show that the confidence in business has fallen from 70% in the 1960's to 15% today.

The Opinion Research Corporation, (1982), found that the ratings of managements competence, honesty and integrity have dropped significantly. These life attitudes color and distort people's work experience and make working relationships on the job cynical. Work attitudes are influenced by the two-fold demographic make-up of an organization, managers and hourly employees have different types of jobs, rewards, and more or less favorable work experiences. Their psychographic predisposition is affected by their socio-economic status and circumstances. All of these factors affect an employees attitude on the job and if their job is perceived as second rate as many blue collar and service level positions are, cynical attitudes about life are paralleled in attitudes about work (Mirvis & Kanter, 1991).

### **Education and Housekeeping Management**

There is a shortage of qualified personnel at all levels of housekeeping (Craig, 1989). There has traditionally been no formal opportunity to skill oneself in the trade before becoming member of management in housekeeping. There is very little formal education training for current or future housekeepers. Even the best schools offer little in management skills, empowerment, etc. Many housekeepers jump from job to job in an effort to gain higher incomes.

Formal training is an indispensable element in achieving productivity goals and there are several concerns that are not addressed by housekeeping departments.

The main deficit is in the educational background of staffs (Keiser, 1989). Many workers may be illiterate or may not be able to communicate in English. As a housekeeper the relationship with almost every other department is important. Housekeepers often become the eyes and ears of the maintenance department because they are in all units of the property daily. Housekeeping managers must maintain good communications by being the generator and receiver of data and services. Special audio/visual training materials and written materials must be used to communicate with housekeeping staffs in English and other languages. The use of these materials can create a problem if the training skill level of the managers (supervisors, directors) are not present. The art of delegation means to pass authority to someone who will act on behalf of the delegator, i.e., upper management. The passing of this responsibility implies that the manager is responsible for the action of their subordinates. Carrying out this management requirement requires the completion of thousands of tasks. The manager then, must introduce materials and communicate them to their departments. The executive housekeeper must be able to coordinate educational programs through area schools and colleges to implement training at all levels to all types of employees. The successful implementation and assessment of the staff skill abilities benefits the housekeeping department and ultimately produces a more competent and productive workforce.

With little formal training of housekeeping management, many executive housekeepers get hired for jobs that they lack the necessary skills to fulfill. Only one professional association exists that provide any level of certification of executive housekeepers. This organization is viewed by some as not having certification standards as high as that might be. Certification that is offered by NEHA may not be a credential that executives hold. It is possible for anyone to become an executive housekeeper regardless of their educational background. Their ability to read, write, spell properly, execute basic speaking skills and basic computer skills is often not a given. The necessity of having these skills becomes an 'on the job' training task responsibility of the hotel property.

### **The Impact of Image**

Management can clearly identify the three most important factors for an organization's success: 1) Customer Service 2) Product quality and 3) technology. A service system requires that the impact of service be serious and necessitates the adoption of a service philosophy from the top down. A clearly defined service philosophy is essential for the organization's competency. That service competency must contain the definition of service as perceived by the product, the CUSTOMER. This definition will vary according to the customers expectations and experiences, but generally, this definition becomes the foundation for the focus of the service organization (the hotel). The mission of management thus becomes the preservation

and refinement of the image of outstanding service in all departments of the organization.

Management understands customer expectations and adjusts its marketing thrust and customer service specifications to reflect such, but often the organization falls short in the consistent delivery of those customer expectations. Travelers (customers) have indicated, in numerous studies and surveys, that room cleanliness ranks very high in determining their level of satisfaction with a hotel. It often ranks number one. If housekeeping fails it incurs not only the wrath of the customer, but it will incur the anger of every other department. Detrimental housekeeping services have a measurable effect on the fulfillment of the hotel's mission, to provide 'good service' (Craig 1992). The hotel is held accountable when its employees fail to perform their services at a desired level, that failure is called a service performance gap. These service performance gaps are common in the service industry, and hotel organizations offer services that are highly interactive, labor intensive, and performed in multiple locations, which makes them extremely vulnerable to these gaps. Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry (1990) feel that opportunities for mistakes and misunderstandings exist when service providers and customers interact with one another: both customers and providers (housekeepers) experience and respond to each others mannerisms, attitudes, competencies, moods, and language. Service quality suffers when employees are unwilling or unable to perform a service at the level required. Service quality suffers when employees are not motivated to perform



their service functions at maximum levels and instead do only enough to avoid being fired.

In chapter three, the focus group identified a point that is pertinent here: "They don't tell you these things in the interview." Housekeepers are often seen as 'Cinderellas of the rich' and even Executive Housekeepers are not viewed or paid as 'Executives'. Historically health care housekeepers make substantially higher wages than hotel housekeepers (Bugh,1989). Research conducted by Zeithaml, et al, indicates that customer contact jobs tend to be situated at the lower levels of company organizational charts and that people who apply and hold these jobs are frequently among the least-educated and lowest-paid employees in the hotel. As was found in this research, many of these employees lack basic language skills, interpersonal skills and hospitality attitudes. The high turnover rates are filled quickly with warm bodies. Managers commonly do not give the proper attention to the hiring and selection process. Norman Laliberte, executive housekeeper of the Portland Regency in Maine, believes that if the turnover rates went down, many corporations would improve and implement better training programs that would in turn, allow for an increase in salaries. Again old paradigm at work!

The compensation story becomes one of the chicken and the egg. Hotels draw from the bottom of the barrel because that's what they pay for. When hotels do not match employees to jobs through selective hiring for skills, attitudes, language

and literacy the service gap emerges. Competing for first rate housekeepers is essential for success in the hotel industry. The chain that excels in service should carefully select and develop its housekeepers. Competing for service oriented housekeepers is slated to become more intense as the labor pool dries up. New and innovative ways to attract housekeepers and keep them is the order of the day. The focus must include the release of old paradigms and the implementation of new ones, especially in Human Resources. Hiring the best, giving the best training, paying the best and watching them deliver the best.

The roadblocks to implementing a new service philosophy for all departments will be unique to each hospitality organization. Many front-line hospitality employees (housekeepers) are quite aware of what it takes on a daily basis to deal with customer needs, but customer service takes skill as well as finesse. Many contact level employees are told to smile and yet are not smiled at by their supervisors. Karl Albrecht stated that 'service management isn't the latest fad or slogan. Employees will conform to the expectations communicated to them, explicitly or implicitly. We have done a great job of communicating the negative. In order to change the image of housekeeping effectively, management will need to educate themselves on the fact that excellence in service takes commitment, training and communication from the top down.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **Methodology:**

The model used for research in this pilot study was conducted on three levels involving three separate groups, at three times and using three research techniques. A present perspective study using descriptive research was used to establish the criteria for the skills necessary for the promotion of housekeepers as identified by surveyed General Managers, Executive Housekeepers and Housekeepers.

The initial research was done using a mailed questionnaire, constructed for the General managers of eleven (11) resort hotel properties in the Virginia Beach area. The eleven hotels were selected according to the property size (number of rooms) and the target market served by those properties. The sampling has no less than 150 rooms and a maximum of 400 rooms. It was determined that hotels that catered to business conventions would be the most affected by housekeeping turnover which impacts not only in house promotions, but customer service.

Virginia Beach is a destination location serviced by the Norfolk airport with over 200 daily commercial arrivals and departures. It is the most populous city in Virginia and the fastest growing on the East coast (Virginia

Beach Data, fy 91-92). The Virginia Beach department of Developments' division of Tourism stated in their recent publication, that 29.9% of overnight travelers to the state selected Virginia Beach as their second highest choice. In 1990, 66% of the summer visitors were return customers. In 1990-91, One-hundred and thirty-six thousand delegates attended 402 convention and trade conferences at the Virginia Beach Pavilion, which was the hub of the sample properties selected for the study. The participants are shown on table 1.

The General Managers of the eleven hotels selected, were mailed the questionnaire composed of specific questions designed to reveal their criteria for promotion of housekeepers into entry-level management positions, which were identified in the three page questionnaire. The first six questions were open-ended to allow the respondent to provide their opinion using an unstructured form. Even though open-ended, the questions were structures to force the participant to rank their answers. Five questions asked the General Managers to identify, through multiple choice selections, the frequency of turnover, the source of replacement candidates, and the basis for promotion that occur 'in-house' at their properties. The final two questions on the survey were used to gather demographic data about the wage position of housekeeping salaries compared to other non-revenue generating departments, and the racial breakdown of the housekeeping departments. The information on the racial breakdown, although not completely necessary,

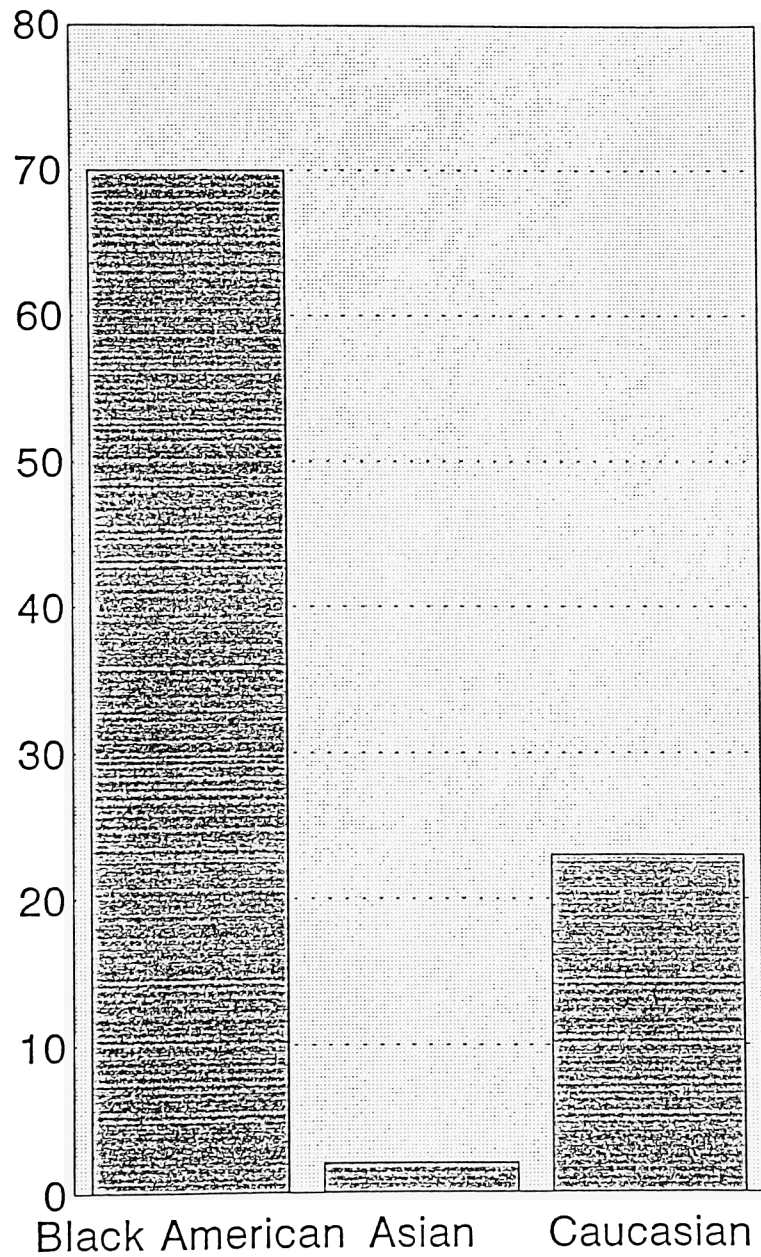
at the onset, was useful in supporting the fact that Commonwealth College specializes in career education for 'at-risk' students. A factor which will be a useful marketing tool in selling the Housekeeping Skills Advancement Program (HSAP), which is to be developed if this research supports the need and criteria for the programs' development.

The second level of questionnaires were mailed to the Executive Housekeepers of the same (11) properties referenced above. These surveys asked six open-ended questions to ascertain the priority criteria for promotability in housekeepers based on personal opinion ranking. Five of the questions identified the frequency of turnover and the basis for promotion of housekeepers. Two questions asked for demographic breakdowns of their department staffs and the wage ranking of their housekeeping departments within the hotel organizations' salary structure.

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Figure 1: Racial Breakdown of Property Housekeepers

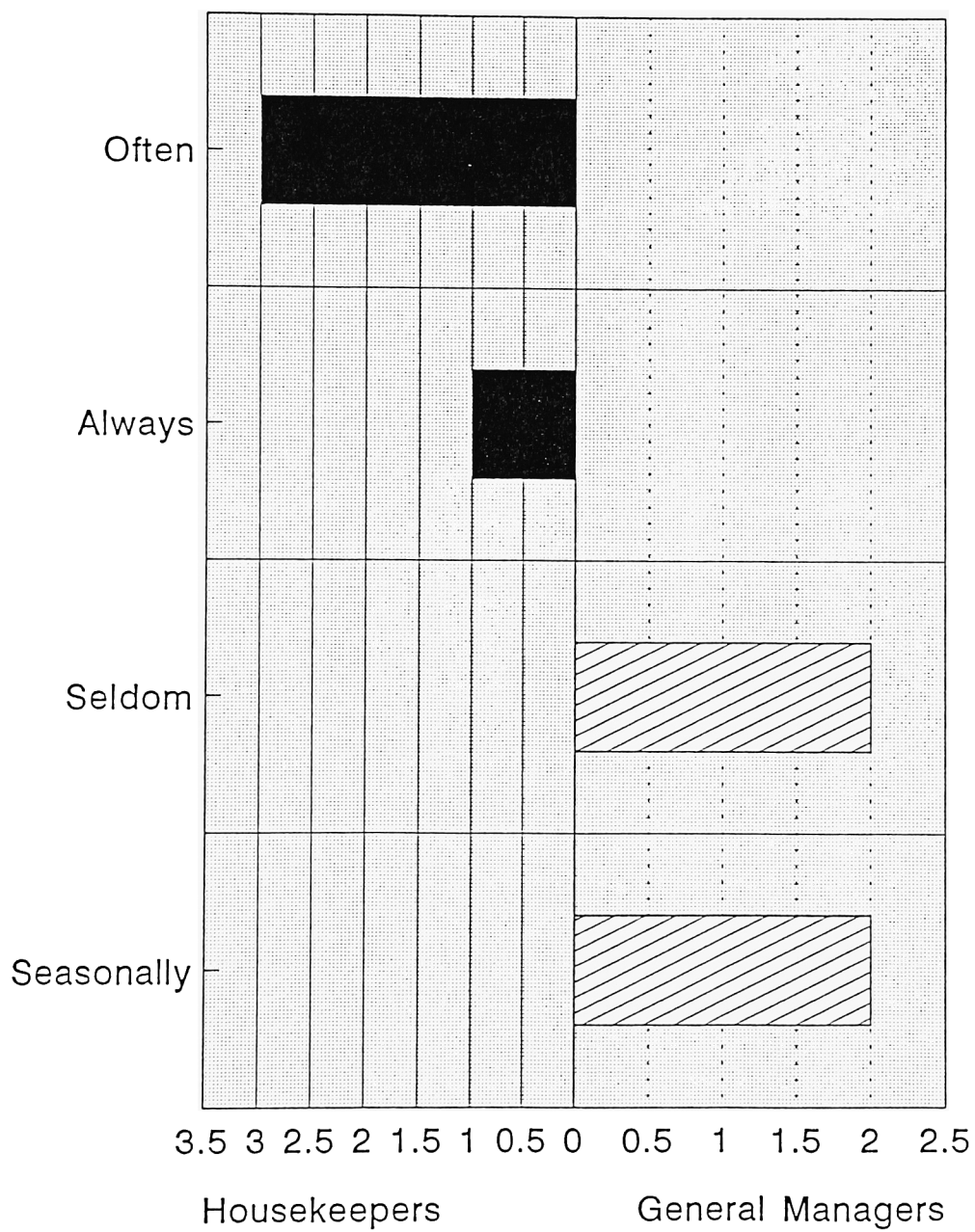
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Figure 2: Frequency of Promotions

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**TABLE: 1 NUMBER OF HOTELS SURVEYED**

<b>PARTICIPANT</b>	<b>HOTEL</b>	<b>NUMBER OF ROOMS</b>	<b>RESPONSE YES/NO</b>
Dan Batchelor	Cavalier Hotels	402	Yes
Ken Taylor	Clarion Conf. Ctr	168	Yes
Chris Williams	Colonial Inn	159	No
Henry Richardson	Comfort Inn	130	No
Linda Throckmorton	Days Inn Oceanfront	120	No
Ann Stierhoff	Founders Inn	247	No
Verne Burlage	Hilton Inn Ocean	120	No
Brad Black	Holiday Inn on the Ocean	266	No
Jay Johnson	Holiday Inn Oceanside	150	No
Kathy Mann	Howard Johnson's	177	No
Steve Townsend	Park Inn International	150	No
James E. Bryan	Quality Inn Pavilion	107	Yes
Frank Shandor	Radisson Virginia Beach	298	No
Bubba Rieves	Ramada Oceanside Tower	216	No
John Vakos	Sandcastle Motel	154	No
Dan Spry	Sheraton Beach Inn	203	No
Carl Smith	Virginia Beach Resort Hotel	295	No
Linwood Branch	South Shore Resort Inn	116	No

All Hotels are Members of the Virginia Beach Hotel/Motel Association



### Focus Group Interaction

According to Davis & Cosenza (1988), there are four conditions that must exist before a successful personal interview can be conducted when collecting active primary data collection. These conditions are access, trust-goodwill, expertise, and motivation. The personal interview method was variate to include a focus group. A detailed, in depth exchange on the issues of Housekeeping and Hospitality was delivered in a rapid fire manner that moved quickly. The access of the group was ideal, as all three members were quite comfortable with one another, the subject and the interviewer. The trust-goodwill factor had been present for over twelve months and was the impetus for the selection and acceptance of the respondents to join the interviewer in her home. The interviewer had discussed this project with many of her students were the expertise of the interviewer was general knowledge. The students of the Tourism/Hospitality department were motivated to assist in any way possible since many of them are housekeepers or had functioned in that capacity in the past. The homogeneity of this group was overwhelming and the interaction covered most of the planned areas of questioning without many specific questions being asked. The general question asked was: How has the role and function of Housekeepers and Executive housekeepers changed over the years. The subsequent question was, what is the relationship between housekeeping and hospitality?

### **Group Profile:**

All three members are currently enrolled in a two year associates degree program in a junior college and maintain GPA's over 2.0. They are all minority females; two Black Americans and one Hispanic. The forth group member was a Black male, but he was fired two days prior to the group meeting from his position in the laundry room. The oldest member is a working parent, 35 years of age with four years of housekeeping experience. Her input, often included comparisons of military housekeeping organizations with Hotel industry housekeeping. This participant has functioned as a member of management in two industries, auto manufacturing and the lodging industry. This grandmother of one and mother of three is a dual major in college, studying accounting and hospitality and is not currently working in the industry. Her views on management in housekeeping are fielding her motivation to gain a college degree to compete for a Director of Housekeeping position. At the beginning of her hospitality program studies she was unaware of the salary structure for housekeeping management. Once aware, her response was, "I can do that (housekeeping) with my eyes closed and I'd make a better Director because I know how to and can manage others with respect."

Group member two, a Hispanic female, has the least amount of professional experience of the group but is currently employed as a

housekeeper in a major resort property. In less than 6 months she has been offered a position at the front desk which she refused. She likes the solitude of housekeeping and the fact that she can just go to work and get her assignment and do her job. She was recently given the additional responsibility of training new housekeepers. She too was unaware of the career opportunities in housekeeping. Entering the college as an electronic technology student, she chose hospitality after an unsuccessful semester. A somewhat combative and hostile student, she stated that she just wanted to get an education and do something because she had to set an example for her two younger siblings. I basically hate school and have never been good at it but I would like to study something useful. After one semester in hospitality the student sought a housekeeping job and declared her road to victory. Her grade point average rose from 1.2 to 2.5. In a recent conversation with her property's Director of Housekeeping she was told, "I like you, because you tell it like it is, you do great work and you're going places".

Group member three was the youngest member of the group. She currently is studying Hotel management and plans to pursue a management career in housekeeping. She is from Jamaica where tourism is the main staple of her country. Her comparative input in the group was interesting. She had previously served an internship with the Marriott Hotel company, in a program that included time in the front of the house as well as the back of

the house. She was the most clearly focused in terms of her career intentions, and had been enrolled in another college program before relocating to Virginia. Her opportunity as an intern gave her input a slightly different focus. One that was not from an employees point of view, but an observer in a hands on learning situation.

### **Group Discussion:**

For simplicity, the group interaction has been presented in categories that match those presented in Chapter Two in the literature review:

### **Hospitality, Housekeeping and Image:**

The group agreed that the job itself was degrading and felt that the industry works you to death but does not pay you.' They felt that the job of cleaning was routine but that the degrading part of the job was most evident in the communication with management, inspectress/inspectors, assistant housekeepers and directors. The group agreed fervently that they, (management) talked to you any kind of way, which translates to a lack of respect. From the housekeepers point, they believed that management only hired the most ignorant people who could not find jobs doing anything else.

The analogy was made that there really was something worse than the hotel industry, the military. It was cited that military housekeepers are really

'dogged' because they are civilians and that the levels of management were more extensive. Due to the stratification of that system, it was deemed virtually impossible to advance to the ranks of management, yet if one so desired that management advancement was conceivable within two years in the hotel industry. The group agreed with the senior member that housekeeping could or could not do something for you, depending on how you see it. Doing 'something' was explained as getting into a better position such as supervisor. Each member recanted situations that described and labeled supervisors as good or bad. The common thought was that when one is perceived as a good supervisor that the person has, first and foremost, experience and expertise in housekeeping. Often hotels hire supervisors who are not experienced. The 'real' supervisors are working ones. Not the people who sit and drink coffee. The general perception of assistant housekeepers is that they do the ordering of supplies, yet housekeepers feel that those assistants need to get out from behind the desk to find out what is really going on in the rooms of the hotel. Managing by walking around and getting involved instead of reacting to guest complaints lodged at the front desk was also an animist thought.

The issue of supervisors seemed to dominate a great deal of the interaction. Specifics of things done incorrectly were counteracted by suggestions of how things ought to be done or how they would be done when

the group members became supervisors and directors. The conversation flowed smoothly into the topic of housekeeping and education. The definition of education took on a new meaning.

### **Housekeepers and Education:**

The group felt that there were limited opportunities for advancement into management and that the opportunities that were open were difficult to achieve without leaving the property. They felt that management hired the dumbest people as housekeepers and supervisors and that when any one housekeeper made the effort to advance she/he was razed by the group. "You don't have to be educated to do this job, but to be promoted you need to be ready". That preparation begins with working hard, but does not always reap the intended benefits. How hard you work equals more money but as a housekeeper that means longer hours, more days on and a great deal of scrutiny. The group each shared stories of how they each became suspect of 'cheating' on their rooms when they excelled. The element of racism also entered the conversation. If the supervisor was white, they thought that you were trying to get their job and felt threatened. If the supervisor was Black a great deal of jealousy entered the picture. Regardless of the race of the supervisor, all felt threatened and began to pick on the housekeeper and in some cases accused them of not cleaning rooms satisfactorily because they had finished ahead of time. Once proving their competency the achiever became

a selected trainer. Generally no additional salary was offered. Hard work paid off with added responsibilities not wages. Collectively the group's experience covered four major chain operations, several independent operators and military hotels. They shared collectively two common chain organizations, although they did not work at the same property. Days Inn and the Marriott were cited as the only hotels where a 'better' housekeeper was actually paid for training others. The Marriott paid the best wages all around and paid the housekeeper her flat rate per hour plus an incentive for training per hour. The total number of hours for training and the length of time were controlled to prevent the housekeeper from making too much money. It was believed that the same thinking was the basis for hiring housekeepers only on a part-time status, which further made advancement difficult, and forced the housekeeper to remain always on the search for a better job that offered full-time status and benefits.

When defining skills needed for advancement, the group agreed that all supervisors should be educated, possess a personality that exhibited hospitality, and that the verbal skills of that housekeeper should be exemplary. The group chorus was that it was imperative that a supervisor be able to give directions in a professional manner using correct English. The housekeeper that goes to school becomes the focal point of much ridicule. If you use big words, that's taboo, stated member number two. "It's a shame when I have

to tell my supervisor how to talk. It makes us look stupid when the guest hears a member of management giving orders unprofessionally and using words like ain't, over yonder, didn't and swear words. A title means you should be educated". The person who speaks well is teased in some cases, held in suspicion or asked to be the spokesperson to present ideas and complaints to management. The group felt that the latter really opened pandora's box. If you present management with suggestions of better working conditions, time saving or labor short cuts, salary increases or the like you really get nowhere fast. If you are smart enough to understand the chain of command, your suggestion never gets out of the department. Generally your supervisor can't write it up, so it leaves you no choice but to talk to some one higher up. If you ask for a raise to upper management they think that you want a union. Mention the word union and you're fired. Housekeeping is such a small, close-knit division that it's difficult to deal with everybody in your business. Once they found out that I was in college, everyone started treating me differently, said member number three. They asked me things like, why are you here?

### **Housekeeping and Empowerment:**

Upon asking the question, what do you like most about the job of housekeeping, the group answered in unison, communicating with the guest. They each agreed that they have met fascinating and important people, and that sometimes they never really know exactly how important that person



really is until they ask about what they do for a living. The conversation almost became a "my dad's bigger than your dad" one, as the members shared the names and position titles of guest that they had come in contact with. The group agreed that the better their communication skills the bigger their tips. If you have personality and it's liked by the guest they sometimes will mention your name on the comment cards or leave a personal note with a cash tip. The group chuckled as the oldest member mimicked the interviewer by saying, 'you've got to like this business to be in it.' A point made weekly by the interviewer during class lectures. If you smile the guest love it. They really like for you to talk with them. If they are stay-overs they will ask you for referrals on restaurants and things to do and see in your city. Member number one continued by saying that it is funny that there was a time when a housekeeper was written up or chastised for talking with a guest, now it's called empowerment. If you flatter the guest and ask to help them they love it and your tip is bigger. Guest really do care about the type of person that is moving around their personal belongings.

They are always impressed when they find out that you're studying something in college, and usually wish you well. The greatest challenge in dealing with the customer directly is when they need something like shampoo, soap or extra pillows and you don't have them because you're waiting on the next shipment. It's rough when the front desk screws up and puts someone in

a bad room. The group agreed that everything that goes wrong at the front desk gets blamed on the housekeeping staff.

The group relived episodes of rough encounters of the customer kind that included what you weren't told in the interview and how impossible it is for non-english speaking housekeepers to communicate with a direct guest request.

#### **Housekeeping and Human Resources:**

The consensus of this group dynamics was that a better job needed to be done in the personnel department. The training for the position of housekeeper should start by a longer training program. That training program should inform the housekeeper of their role in the whole hotel operation. It was felt that if housekeeping employees were treated better through better training in a better educational setting that the hotel would get a better employee. The average training period expressed by the group was two days. Those two days are not enough and it was felt that many people leave or get fired because of poor training. Virtually none of the hotels mentioned offered any additional training through the Human Resources division to upgrade the skills of housekeepers, to increase their opportunities for advancement or to insure their success once being promoted into the next level. The observation

was made that there must be some type of training, but that it was not advertised (posted on Bulletin Boards).

The second point of contention was that hotels don't offer housekeepers any investment in the future, like stock shares, 401K, or profit sharing. They (hotels) really don't care about housekeepers, they just want us to be there all the time and clean the rooms. When I become a manager, I will let my staff know how important they are so that they will appreciate the job they do. Most managers today don't have any clue about what it takes to be a housekeeper, said member number three. When I did a research paper on the Hyatt, I found out that they send all of their managers into the department of the hotel and make them do the work of those people. I think the Hyatt has got the right idea, that's why they are on the top". Respondent number two countered the story by humorously recounting how her property had tried the same thing and that a member of upper management couldn't even clean three rooms before quitting and returning to the sanctity of her office. If managers don't understand the skill of a job how can you allow them to inspect and supervise room cleaning done by housekeepers? If there was more understanding of this job there would be less hassle.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Survey Results

The results of the surveys mailed was generally very poor. The information contained on the responses did support the assumptions of the research. Of the eighteen surveys sent to the General Managers, four of them responded within the requested time frame of one week. Eighteen surveys were also mailed to the Executive Housekeepers of the same properties. None of them responded.

The first two questions asked the General Managers to rank and identify the top three characteristics that they liked the most about their Housekeeping department. This question was inserted to establish the 'positive' image words used by general managers. The issue of the image of housekeeping was also a focal point of this research.

#### Three Positive Word Responses

##### Number one Attribute of Housekeeping Department

1. Efficiency
2. Knowledge
3. Personality

The second level of positive responses to question one were dependability and willingness to serve the guest. In a last ditch attempt to gather data after no responses from the surveys were received from the

Executive Housekeepers, a second focus group interview was held. The criteria for the format was the questionnaire. The focused interview was done with two Executive Housekeepers, one with five years of experience and the other with 10 years of service. Their responses to question one was similar in many ways to the General Managers, and differed in other ways. To question one their response was; faithfulness, they (housekeepers), do a good job, and that they are 'respectful to the guest' as measured by guest compliments. The final items of positiveness that General Managers felt strongly about was the structure of the departments, the procedures, reflected by the management, and the desire to grow of the housekeeping department.

Question two showed the highest degree of difference in the answers between the GM's and the Executive Housekeepers. Perhaps their level in the management structure accounted for the difference. The question was "what three things do you like the least about your housekeeping staff/department?" The top managers said in ranking order; 1) turnover 2) illiteracy 3) attitude and follow-up. The Executive Housekeepers said 1) transportation 2) day care and 3) call-ins. These three priorities cited by the Executive Housekeepers affect their immediate daily operations. The end result of these problems were cited by the GM's as reasons for turnover and poor attitudes. Jones & Martin (1992) include these problems as 'normative characteristics exhibited by housekeeping employees. The state that in order

to effectively manage housekeeping employees, one must attempt to understand their cultural, psychological, and social makeup. " A worker may often have emotional or economical problems, or may even have a dependency problem. Housekeeping is not the only department with these problems, but many would argue that the frequency of these problems is higher in housekeeping than other areas. The department often attracts displaced housewives, single parents and former welfare recipients who have a higher incidence of these problems" (Jones & Martin,1992). Seventy-five per cent (75%) of the housekeepers indicated that they were the only wage earners in their households. When it comes to intrinsic worth, housekeeping is at the back of the line. Many housekeepers from lower socio-economic backgrounds find the struggle to try to 'get out those backgrounds', often is the major factor in the formation of their attitude and behavior, which sometimes is not compatible with traditional corporate values and cause problems at work.

When asked to respond to how they knew that their staffs (housekeeping) were doing a good job , the most common answer was through guest comments, fewer guest complaints, and high inspection scores. The reverse of that question, ' how do you know that your staff is not doing a good job? yielded the reverse response of guest complaints, low inspection scores and negative guest comment cards.

Questions five and six address the area of skill introduction and skill enhancement. These two questions were the 'meat' of the survey. It was this response that supported the purpose of the research. Not only did management list 'communication skills' as the first priority, the housekeepers themselves felt the need to possess these skills. The Executive Housekeepers and General Managers felt that 'communication skills' were the most essential for aid in customer effectiveness and promotability. The housekeepers also agreed with some GM's on the fact that basic computer skills were an area of need and interest. A different response from the Executive Housekeepers showed that a need for the ability to make decisions would be welcomed.

When asked to list the top skills desired by the hotel in promotable housekeepers, the response was explicit. The criteria needed and desired was unanimous, even though several different words were used:

1. Organization
2. Professionalism
3. Supervisory Skills
4. Communication Skills
5. High Work Performance
6. Efficiency
7. Pleasant Personality
8. Ability To Take Pressure
9. Ability To Handle Many Tasks

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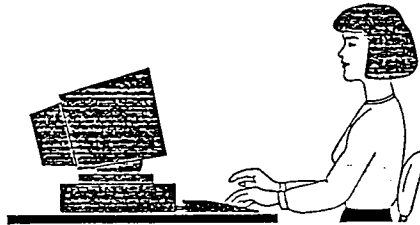
Figure 3: Ranking of Skills to Enhance

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Criteria for Increasing Customer Relations  
Executive Housekeepers and General Managers

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- \* Communications Skills (75% said yes)
- \* Basic Education Skills (75% said yes)
- \* Basic Computer Skills (75% said yes)
- \* Building Self Esteem (25% said yes)



Identified by all Management Levels



An interesting dichotomy emerged when the conversation with the focus group of housekeepers was compared to the above referenced management responses: The group felt that the job itself was routine but degrading when it came to communication. The group felt that management talked to them 'any kind of way' which translated to a lack of respect. The group stated in agreement that supervisors should be educated, possess a personality that exhibited hospitality, and that the verbal skills of that supervisor should be exemplary. The perception of all involved seem to agree that it was imperative for a supervisor to give directions in a professional manner using correct English. Using correct English or 'good english' was thought to leave a housekeeper open for ridicule, especially if that housekeeper was attending school. From the housekeepers point of view, they believed that management hired the most ignorant people who could not find jobs doing anything else. When asked what they liked the most about the job the response was unified from the housekeepers, communicating with the guest. They agreed that the better their communication skills the bigger their tips, and that the guest really 'love it' when you smile and talk with them. " Guest really do care about the type of person that's moving around their personal belongings. It's funny, there was a time when you were written up for talking with a guest, now it's called empowerment"!

### **Manpower Staffing:**

Seven questions were structured into the surveys for both the General Managers and the Executive Housekeepers to address the demographic factors of manpower. Each property did have a structured organizational chart that contained specific management positions in housekeeping. Fifty percent of the properties reported that they had one to three management positions and fifty percent reported four to ten positions. Sixty per cent of the housekeepers surveyed and those in the focus group stated that they would like to advancement to the positions of Assistant Housekeepers. Twenty per cent of them identified advancement into supervision. This author assumed that the total percentage was eighty. Arrived at combining the numerical scores and the terminology. Properties responded to the question on frequency of hiring in two specific responses: Fifty per cent of them hired housekeepers only seasonally, and fifty per cent hire them often (1-3 times per year). All properties stated that management positions are 'often' filled from within. To further probe this area the question 'On what Basis do you promote housekeepers was asked. The General Managers data stated positively (75%), that the top criteria was 'Merit/Work performance. Twenty five per cent stated that they also promote on the basis of ' Management Skills Potential' (See Figure 5). The input from the focus group was stimulating. Their perspective of supervisors was humorous and contradictory.

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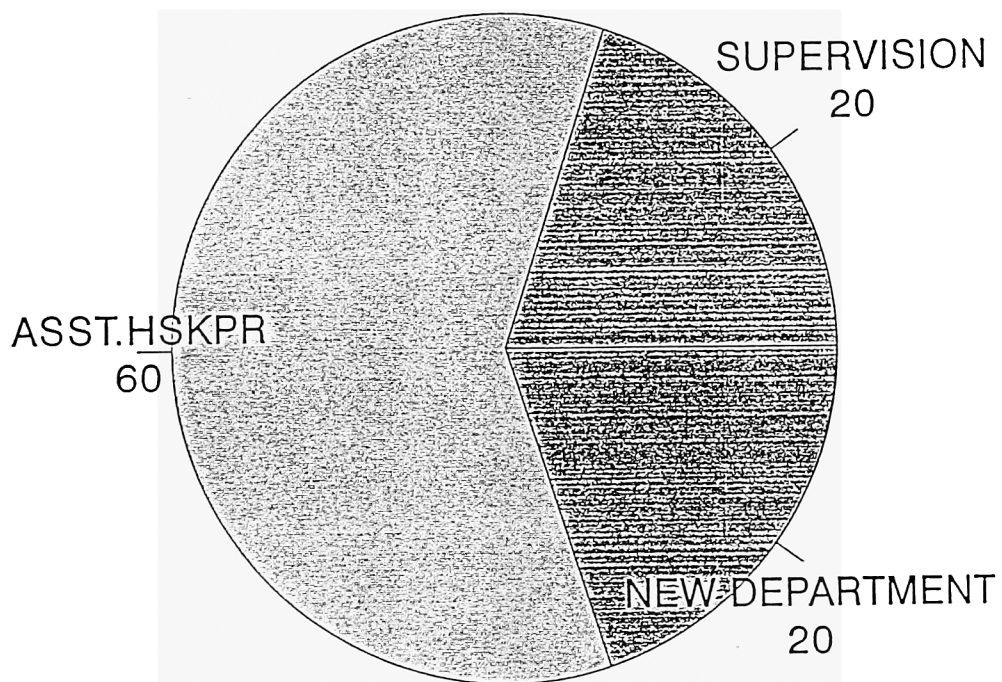
Figure 4: Position Advancement

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# POSITION ADVANCEMENT

## IDENTIFIED BY HOUSEKEEPERS

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FAVOR MOVING UP IN HOTEL

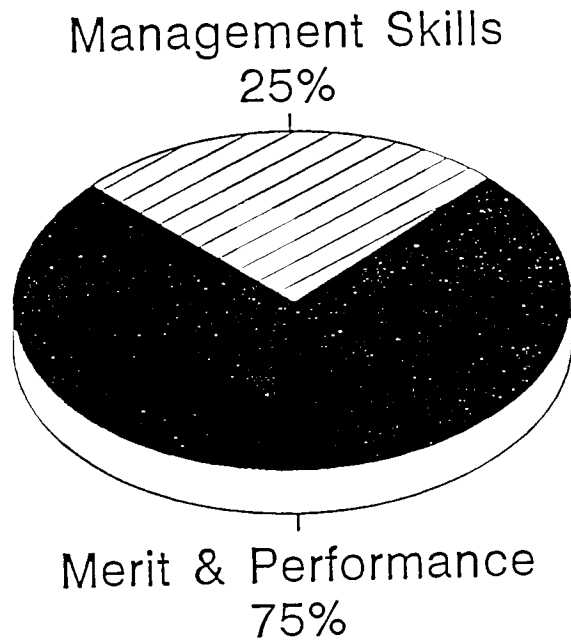
MINIMUM - 1YR EXPERIENCE

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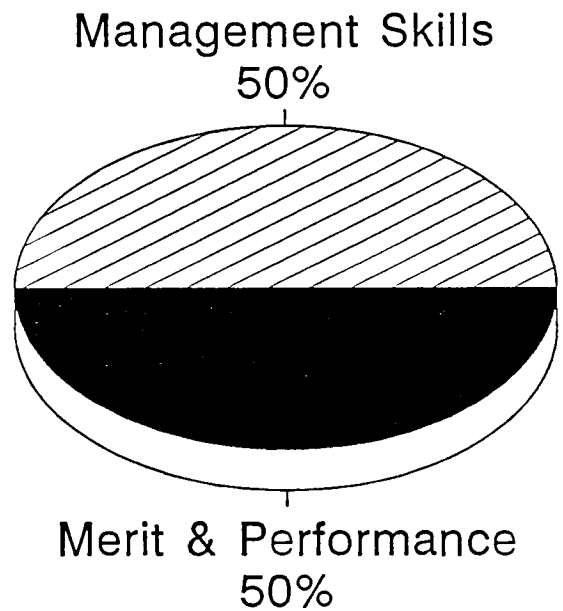
Figure 5: Basis of Promotion

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## General Managers



## Executive Housekeepers



The common thought was that when hiring or promoting housekeepers to supervisors that they must have expertise in and experience in housekeeping. They felt based on experience, that hotels often hire supervisors who are not experienced. The distinction of 'real supervisors' was defined as one's who work and not just sit and drink coffee. The general perception of assistant housekeepers was that of ordering supplies. It was stated that those supervisors needed to get out from behind their desk and get involved by managing by walking around instead of reacting to guest complaints. Further specific criticisms were discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

Overall the responses and reaction of the focus groups was positive, lacking only volume. The perceptions of the housekeepers toward management's selection was in some cases different, yet the criteria for promotion and the recognized attributes of entry-level management positions were significantly similar.

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Figure 6: Housekeepers Criteria for Promotion

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- \* Communications Skills
- \* Basic Education Skills
- \* Basic Computer Skills
- \* Building Self Esteem

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Analysis and Pilot-Study Outcome

In accordance with the corporate marketing plan, it is the intention of this author to position the hospitality department of Commonwealth College as a viable and permanent source of training for entry-level positions in the hotel/conference/resort segment of the hotel industry in Virginia. The concentration on the housekeeping department is a primary concern of hoteliers, and a constant manpower need. In soliciting primary data, it has been determined that the need for training exists in this crucial department. The introduction of Commonwealth College as a source for on- and off-site service delivery, supervisory skills and empowerment theory for housekeeping management will be recommended to area general managers who participated in the pilot study survey.

The human resources management projections for the 90's substantiates reasons for impacting the financial factors of the tourism/hotel/restaurant management program of Commonwealth College in a head on fashion. The jobs in Virginia Beach's hotel industry will be education and skill intensive. The time of empowerment for hotel workers will definitely require skill as well as finesse. The current demographic and economic trends in Virginia will force the hotel owners to take an active role

in developing and training their ailing workforce and projected labor pools. That should motivate them to look for alternatives, guidance and assistance. "Education and training are paramount to maintaining a workforce capable of the productivity necessary to remain competitive" (Reich, 1990). Commonwealth College is qualified and competent. The levels at which we can provide knowledge and training will reach all stratas of this industry.

As indicated by the participation and responses of the general manager participants, companies are beginning to refocus and shift their attention to their housekeeping staffs. They recognize that housekeepers are direct links to customers and long-term sales strategies. There is a labor shortage that is shrinking and will continue to shrink. It is projected that the entering workforce for the next eight years, nationally, will be immigrants and minorities with distinct language and education barriers. The apparent immediate solution would be to hire younger, white people, but that in itself is also a challenge. In the next few decades the 'baby Boom' will be followed by the 'baby bust' (McNaught & Barth, 1992). The average age of the workforce will climb from thirty-six to thirty-nine. William McNaught stated that as the supply of younger workers diminishes, many companies are beginning to recruit retirees into nontraditional positions, such as frontline service jobs. Surveys suggest that there are many unemployed older persons who wish to work, but concerns about productivity still keep some companies

from hiring them. Our children are becoming increasingly disinterested in staying in school and are dropping out at a rate of 71%. Even college enrollments are expected to drop from 12.5 million to 12.2 million by 1997.

If the schools are doing such a good job of turning the students off, where will the help come from? Some new alliances will be forged between the community education systems and the corporate structure. What institution will have the infrastructure to provide adult educators and job readiness skills trainers? The hospitality industry will have to look within and begin. 1992 has us singing a different tune. We now are looking at empowerment for all hotel employees, the few that we may have. That all important skilled 'personal touch', no matter how advanced technology gets will never replace 'personal service'. Perhaps we ought to hire housekeepers capable of asking a guest in the hall, 'How did you sleep?' If that answer is less than positive, we want that housekeeper to call the front desk and let them know, "Dr. Brown didn't rest well". That's empowerment at the greatest level, providing, the housekeeper can speak English. According to the predictions, she won't be able to, and the burden to teach and keep 1868XHer be the responsibility of the housekeeping department.

The role of education in reconciling dilemmas facing hoteliers and human resource management will force us to take a firm role in developing



vehicles for training before hiring and after employment. Private, career and junior college can become the source of unlimited potential.

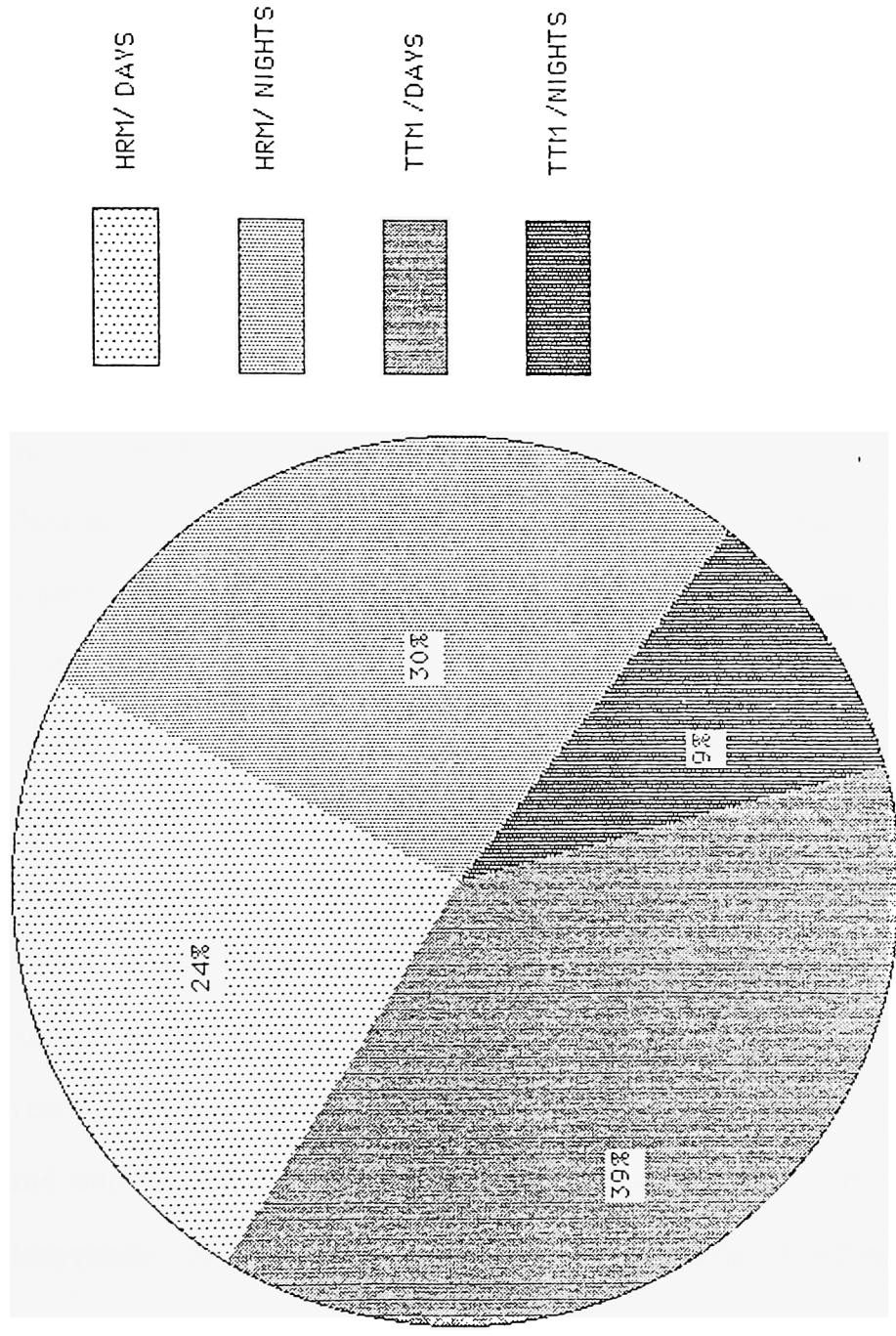
### **Marketing Analysis**

This analysis was conducted jointly with the pilot study in anticipation of the positive findings of the study.

### **Customer Analysis**

As was alluded to previously, there exists two distinct customers, although one can be identified as 'product' and the other the 'customer'. I prefer to identify them as the 'primary customer' (the student) and the 'secondary customer' (the hotel industry). The hospitality (hotel/restaurant) students are distinct in many ways. The majority of them are students who attend the college in the evening in and are classified by the college as members of the adult division. The adult division, although it comprises the vast majority of total enrollments, has never been recognized as being separate from what the public perceives as a traditional college, that perception being a school for kids after high school with other students in the evenings. This is how the other colleges and community colleges have positioned themselves. The fact is, that the non-traditional student prefers to attend classes with older, more mature students. Effective in March of 1991, Commonwealth College established the "Adult Division". The evening student

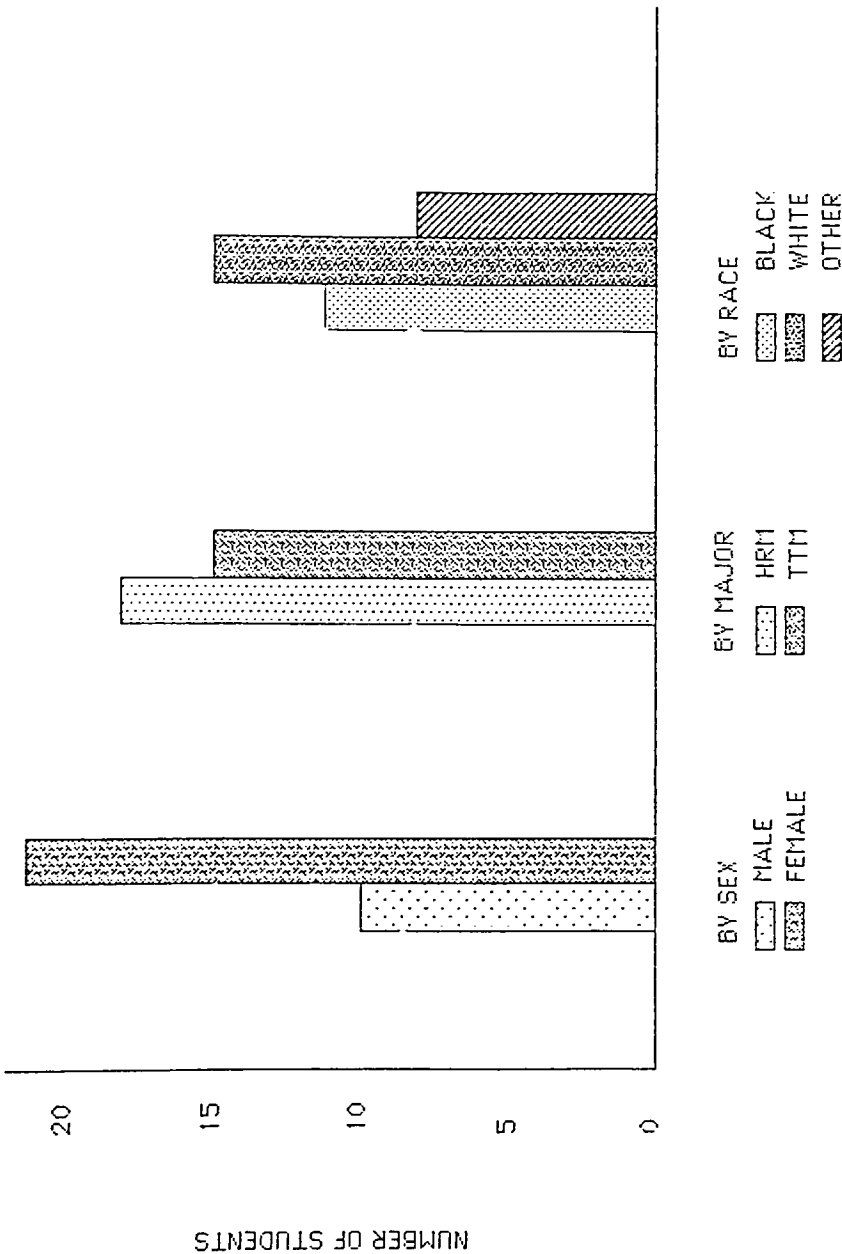
Figure 7: Program Concentration



in hospitality is generally clearly focused on their career goals or changes. Twenty percent (20%) of the population are active duty military. All of the hospitality students in the day and evening divisions are fully employed with the exception of two. Seven (7) are female and eight (8) are male. Most of them have had previous college experience and only two (2) of the enrolled have below a 2.0 GPA. There are only five (5) minority students, all African-Americans, and one (1) foreign student from South America.

The caliber of the students is changing. The astute 'travel' student changes their mind after counseling on future job opportunities. They come from area hotels, from various levels of positions: general manager, assistant GM, front office clerks, F&B managers, and housekeepers. In the admissions phase of a new student's processing, there often is not a clear distinction made regarding the focus of the two (2) concentrations offered, travel/hospitality and hotel/restaurant. There exists a dual definition of the target market student who is recruited. The curriculum is designed for the adult learner returning to the academic arena after a time lapse. That definition extends itself to explicitly identify the 'non-traditional' student. The implicit and unpublished definition is that of 'at risk' student. Entrance examinations render low CPAT scores in verbal and written English and math areas.

Figure 8: Department Demographics



All of the students are either working class citizens or, in the case of the day students, they are children of working class parents. Forty-two (42) percent of the population are employed in average paying, blue-collar positions. Eighteen (18%) percent of them are in the Navy. All of them depend heavily upon their spouses or significant others for emotional support during the education process. Most of them have not and do not take major vacations during the eighteen (18) months that they are enrolled. Twenty-nine (29) of the thirty-three (33) are single and display some signs, covert or overt of lack of self-esteem and/or confidence. Growth in their ideal self-concept is visual as they proceed through the program. Their most flagrant display of low self-esteem appears when forced to make oral presentations before the class. Despite individual self-crisis in confidence and performance, all that remain past the second quarter are clearly sustained and many become integrated. The population in general, has had some kind of negative experience with the formal school system. After graduation they fled from the school scene, with promises not to return. During their hiatus employment desires became real and actualization of those goals led them to make the decision to return to college. In one-one-one conversations, these students will reveal the fact that they never thought they would make it.

Table 2: Hospitality Customer Analysis (Breakdown for VBCH Campus)

<b><u>Hotel/Restaurant Management</u></b>	<b><u>Day Division</u></b>
GPA: 2.7	Black Male
2.5	White Male
1.6	Black Male (Hotel Baker)
3.5	White Female
4.0	White Male
2.8	White Male (Chef)
1.8	Black Female *
2.8	White Male *
<b><u>Hotel/Restaurant Management</u></b>	<b><u>Evening Division</u></b>
GPA: 3.0	Black male (Navy)
3.6	White Male
2.5	South American (Navy)
3.0	White Female (Navy - 4yr. Degreed) (4 Males)
2.3	Black Female
1.8	White Female (McDonalds)
4.0	White Female (Restaurant Mgr.)
3.5	White Male (Navy)
1.8	Black Male (Meeting Video)
2.3	Black Female (Hotel Housekeeper)
<b><u>Travel/Tourism</u></b>	<b><u>Day Division</u></b>
GPA: 2.9	Puerto Rican Female
1.4	White Female
2.0	Black Female
4.0	White Female (Travel Agent)
3.0	White Female
4.0	Swedish Female
2.5	White Female (Navy)
3.8	Asian Female (4yr. Degreed)
2.8	Black Female *
1.5	Black Female *
1.5	White Female *
2.0	Cyprus Female *
4.0	Black Female *
<b><u>Travel/Tourism</u></b>	<b><u>Evening Division</u></b>
GPA: 2.65	Puerto Rican Female
	Greek Female (Navy)

Although some exceptions are present, geographically the population are migrants from other parts of the country. Most live in Virginia Beach as a result of forced migration initiated by the U.S. Navy. Demographic information is provided on the graph included. All are between the ages of 20 and 34.

### **Competitor Analysis**

There exists one competitor in the general area for the tourism/travel program. That program is a certificate program operated by Lucas Travel School based out of North Carolina. They face the same market placement problem that Commonwealth faces. In the past, we have enrolled and will graduate 'A' students from this establishment. One basic barrier of entry in the market is that they are not an accredited college, possess no financial packaging and consistently do not place 100% of their program graduates. For the 'serious travel student' financial aid is crucial in this demographic market. Within the last year, Lucas has expanded their product line to include hotel front office classes. A program that was instituted after their acquisition of the former Department Chairman of the Norfolk Commonwealth College campus. A gentleman with whom was consulted and market strategies for increasing enrollment was discussed. The one viable asset that should be identified is that the owner/director is a former Commonwealth College instructor, and experienced travel agent and can

relegate on her suppliers and other agency contacts to assist in placing students who have completed the certificate classes in the top of their class, after twelve (12) weeks of instruction.

The successful launching of a four-year hotel/restaurant management program at Norfolk State has added validity to the need for Commonwealth College to increase and upgrade its program. Commonwealth will be a natural feeder institution for NSU. As a goal of the President's Task Force on the tourism/hotel program, a relationship with the Directors of the NSU program has been established. They have agreed to 'look' at our students on an individual basis upon recommendation of the Commonwealth College hotel/restaurant chairman. Tidewater Community College does offer a two-year degree in food management. Their market is primarily for institutional food service workers. Their tuition is considerably less than Commonwealth College. There appears to be no attempt to address the market to increase their enrollment. They are just 'sorta there'.

### **Trends, Opportunities and Threats**

There often exists a misunderstanding of the 'true' economics of the hospitality industry by the community and that lack of understanding is reflected in the labor market where tourism jobs are viewed as second rate when compared to other industries. Factors or barriers that impede progress



in our industry also stagnate educational systems that service and train employees of the hospitality fields. Commonwealth College is a private two-year college that specializes in training students for specific career jobs. As an integral part of the Virginia Beach community, it seeks to service those industries, one of which is the hotel/restaurant/tourism market. Being tuition driven with no government subsidizing, the school's financial existence has been affected recently by several financial factors: enrollment, tuition increases, the 91-92 recession, operation dessert storm, and strategically placed negative publicity.

The need to live up to the mission statement of serving the needs of the students and the community by providing quality collegiate educational programs in careers with high employment potential that make a positive impact on the society and environment is confronting its greatest challenge. To meet its financial budget, Commonwealth College must continue to downsize. The next heir apparent; the smallest department with low enrollment, Tourism/Hospitality. The total full-time enrollment (FTE) of this department is 23, which generates approximately .04% of gross revenue..."Educational Programs with High Employment Potential"? That presents quite an oxymoron when eliminating job skills training programs that impactsan industry that hosts more than 2,500,000 visitors annually, grossed \$4.3 million in revenue and paid \$1.75 million to the City of Virginia Beach

in taxes. An oxymoron when this industry employs 12,000 full-time and 9,000 part-time summer workers.

The U.S. economy is entering into a phase of restructuring which will call for an increasing focus on job training and retraining. As we move into the information age, workers will need to move into positions within the service sector. The new jobs in the service sector will demand much higher skills levels, and will create all of the new jobs and most of the wealth over the next 13 years. The educational preparation of workers will demand that the standards in our educational system be raised.

The service industries are not the only ones to face manpower shortages. President Bush forecasted that 210,000 additional teachers will be needed each year between 1990 and 1997 to handle the projected 1.8 million high school students who will begin their secondary education. There are indications that teacher shortages will become a priority as enrollments in teacher education programs continue to decline as they have since the 70's and 80's. The importance of education and training are critical. The hospitality industry will have to look within to begin. The thrust of training by human resource departments will take on what might appear to be an impossible mission. Some new alliances will be forged between the community education systems and the corporate structure. If the schools are

doing such a good job of turning out the students, where will help come from? What institution will have the infrastructure to provide adult educators and job readiness skills trainers. It can be taken as a given that future jobs will require workers who can read instructions, do basic arithmetic, analyze data and use a computer. Community colleges will need to undergo some new strategies and implement new programs, but given most government institutions, those changes will be accomplished by the year 3030.

The future of private business colleges has increased significantly. Most of them, especially Commonwealth have projected these shortages, addressed themselves to new paradigms in education, and are 'perfectly poised to win, hands down' (Kennedy, 1989). The public funding of education in Virginia has been drastically cut, making private education more affordable and public post-secondary school performance less acceptable as more national attention and emphasis is placed on junior colleges as being the acceptable minimum for career positions and with a lack of employment for many four-year graduates. The hospitality industry is the third largest industry in the SMSA with the Navy being the first.

### **Analysis and Strategies**

Commonwealth College, according to a large scale 1990 awareness study, has an image problem. The problem isn't good or bad; in fact, people

don't have a perception of Commonwealth College as being favorable or unfavorable. The public doesn't really know what we are except for the fact that we are a 'typical' college. However, we aren't typical and we have to tell our prospective customers who we are, what we do and how we do what we do and for whom we do it. In the late spring and most recently two-weeks ago the college received a barrage of bad publicity based on a combination of personnel decisions made and student misconceptions and distorted facts. The interesting plot to these internally leaked attacks still needs to be uncovered and exposed. In looking at the available options and using guerrilla marketing techniques, it was decided that radio was the most effective and credible media to use. The cost of production was considerably lower than TV commercials. The ad for Hampton Roads shows that TV is not as focused or desirable for our demographic segment of 18-34 year olds.

With radio as our principle advertising medium, we are running spots on four (4) main 12-week starts, in addition, we will use four (4) two-week television spots before the September and January starts. As a result of this targeting, we calculated a reach of about 90% of our information-need areas.

The accompanying page will illustrate the specific overview of our radio and television expenses and coverage markets. This information was taken from the corporate marketing plan.

## **Tidewater Media Vehicle**

### **Radio Stations**

WAFX-FM    Classic Rock

WOWI-Fm    Urban

WCMS-FM    Country

WFOG-FM    Easy Listening

WLTY-FM    Oldies

WNIS-AM    News/Talk

## **Marketing/Media Objectives**

To educate our target audience regarding Commonwealth College and our programs targeting the hotel/restaurant program and thereby create leads and increase enrollments for the four major full-term starts by 33 new students college-wide, generating an additional \$550,000 in revenue for the fiscal year 92-93.

## **Target Audience Profiles**

### **Primary:**

Adults 18-34    Career Change Options

### **Secondary:**

Women 18-44    Working Mothers, Homemakers

Adults 18-44    Military Outbound

### Production Costs

Radio	\$ 170,365
Television	<u>80,738</u>
Total	\$ 251,103

### Media Strategy

Utilize targeted mass media in Hampton Roads through a combination of TV and radio.

### Radio Rationale

- ◆ Establish the program's image
- ◆ Target specific audiences
- ◆ Provide frequency

### Production Costs:

Hank Baughman	\$15,000
Commercial	<u>\$10,000</u>
Total	\$25,000

### Television Rationale

- ◆ Visualize the program's image (small college makes a big difference)
- ◆ Target specific audiences (hotel/tourism owners and workers)

### Television Stations

WAVY-TV	Ch 10	NBC
WGNT-TV	CH 27	INDEP
WTKR-TV	CH 3	CBS
WTVZ-TV	CH 33	FOX
WVEC-TV	CH 13	ABC
CABLE	VARIOUS	

### Market Factor Strategies

Our experience on adult career education had taught us that we must understand the basic motivation of the adult learner. There is a very simple fact that emerges and is apparent: no one wants to go to school! Adults want better careers, second careers and better futures. This desire translates into better homes, cars, and vacations. To build a student psychographic data base, we have an inexpensive way to identify the households most likely to contain our student. Implementing a student opinion survey allowed us to collect data on our existing population. A second survey was instituted as part of the application process. The prospective student is asked to complete a psychographic questionnaire to disclose their fears, projected strengths and perceived weaknesses. These surveys coupled with admissions application indicating addresses result in a report that tell us the zip code, carrier route number, number of households on the route and number of students on that

route who have attended Commonwealth College. Once determined, the carrier routes that contain former or current students, we will continue to use those neighborhoods as the prime source for direct mail outs. Neighborhoods do not change--people change. As the old residents prosper and move to better neighborhoods they will be replaced with new people needing career skills to promote mobility. (exhibit attached) The cost of the direct mail leads produced is in the \$8 - 13 per lead range. Direct leads not only cost less, but are more likely to produce enrollments because those leads are coming from targeted neighborhoods. Therefore, the cost of each enrollment is greatly reduced. Another direct mail vehicle that has proven successful is the education and employment questionnaire. The name of this piece is an important consideration in itself. Our number one competitor in the traditional and non-traditional market is not another school, but the job market itself. Many hotel/restaurant students are successful in gaining employment once professional AH & MA courses are passed. These certification courses afford the student a leading advantage in the hospitality industry because the professional certificates are recognized world wide as a level of attained competence.

Our plan is to mail this piece to our base demographic markets at the rate of 2500 pieces per week for 40 weeks at a cost of \$260 per/mailed or \$26,000 per campus. The cost per lead is projected around \$11 - 13 per



positive lead, calculated on a 2% plus response. In addition to this mailing, it is recommended that a selective piece be mailed to emphasize hotel/restaurant careers be mailed to neighborhood that contain hotels and restaurants within a five mile radius. (See Exhibit)

**Direct Mail Expenses:**

Direct Mail	\$152,500
Other Mass Mail	<u>\$ 28,000</u>
Total	\$180,500

**Yellow Pages Advertising**

This form of advertising has become a more valuable source of leads. This is particularly important for our 'non-traditional' students who do not have access to high school resource rooms. This segment of the population is extremely important to our hospitality marketing effort. It is recommended that the ads specifically address the hospitality program as one of America's most in-demand professions. (See Exhibit) The budget of \$34,795 should incur no substantial change.

**Newspaper Advertising**

This medium will continue as a lead generating activity on a limited basis. The Virginian-Pilot & the Ledger Star has often reported biased

information and has been the main vehicle for the slanderous accusations launched against Commonwealth College. By being the only newspaper in Northern Virginia we find ourselves in somewhat of a catch 22. Our main concentration is in the following daily and Sunday papers:

### **The VP & LS**

The VP & LS cover the areas of Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Suffolk. Circulation of 235,027 on Sunday plus 100% coverage through home delivery.

### **The Daily Press**

The Daily Press covers the Peninsula of Virginia that contains our Hampton Campus which has the second highest enrollment in the tourism/hotel/restaurant management program circulation of 122,077 on Sunday plus 100% coverage in-home delivery.

We tested a concept of a newspaper insert which proved to be an excellent lead generator (See Exhibit) in 1992 we will utilize two of these inserts. In addition to the newspaper inserts, a selected classified section ad gear toward women and the military it is suggested that those ads be changed to reflect career in Virginia's largest resort and conference industry.

### **News Advertising Expenses**

Virginian-Pilot	\$ 72,000
Daily Press	\$ 20,000
Richmond Times	\$ 16,000
Misc. Ads	<u>\$ 2,000</u>
Total	\$ 110,000

### **Recommendations and Budget Request**

Actual market share gain cannot be calculated however research data supports current human resources forecasts that service sector jobs are and will continue to be in demand. Several identifiable forces should drive our hotel/restaurant sales segment positively during the unswayed eight years. With no visible competition to capture this market, if we do not move to tailor our strategy to saturate this market, we may find this department extinct and we will fail to deliver our mission effectively.

The student/ensued ratio at the VBCH, Norfolk, and Portsmouth campuses is 33/1. The instructor serves as the advisor and human resources specialist. In order to deliver excellence in the program, the following recommendations should be considered:

1. Additional instructor/marketer should be added with dual responsibilities
2. Recommended changes should be made in current advertising

3. Additional placement counselor should be added with a background in hospitality
4. Library resources should be increased to include computer software for the hotel industry.
5. Additional computers should be added to the HRM classroom
6. An agreement to lease should be established with a hotel CRS system.
7. A special housekeeping management seminar should be conducted.

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## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A**  
**General Manager Questionnaire and Results**



**GENERAL MANAGER QUESTIONNAIRE  
RIT THESIS RESEARCH**

**WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE THINGS YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR HOUSEKEEPING STAFF/DEPARTMENT?**

**WHAT THREE THINGS DO YOU LIKE THE LEAST ABOUT YOUR HOUSEKEEPING STAFF/DEPARTMENT?**

**HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR HOUSEKEEPING STAFF IS DOING A GOOD JOB?**

**HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR HOUSEKEEPING STAFF IS NOT DOING A GOOD JOB?**

**WHAT PRIORITY SKILLS WOULD YOU LIKE TO INTRODUCE TO YOUR HOUSEKEEPING STAFF TO AID IN THEIR EFFECTIVENESS WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS?**

**WHAT PRIORITY SKILLS SHOULD BE INCREASED IN YOUR PROMOTABLE HOUSEKEEPERS?**

**HOW OFTEN DO YOU HIRE HOUSEKEEPERS?**

**DOES YOUR HOUSEKEEPING ORGANIZATIONAL CHART CONTAIN MANAGEMENT POSITIONS?**

**HOW MANY HOUSEKEEPING MANAGEMENT POSITIONS ARE IN YOUR PROPERTY?**

**IDENTIFY ALL THE HOUSEKEEPING JOB TITLES INCLUDED AT YOUR PROPERTY?**

**HOW OFTEN ARE MANAGEMENT POSITIONS (HOUSEKEEPING) FILLED FROM WITHIN?**

**ON WHAT BASIS DO YOU PROMOTE HOUSEKEEPERS?**

**HOW OFTEN HAVE HOUSEKEEPING MANAGERS LEFT YOUR EMPLOYMENT IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?**

**WHAT TOP SKILLS DOES YOUR HOTEL DESIRE IN PROMOTABLE HOUSEKEEPERS FOR ADVANCEMENT?**

WHICH WAGE RANK DESCRIBES YOUR OVERALL HOUSEKEEPING SALARIES FOR THE YEAR AS COMPARED TO OTHER NON-REVENUE DEPARTMENTS?

PLEASE IDENTIFY THE RACIAL MAKE-UP OF YOUR HOUSEKEEPNG STAFF?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW THE OUTCOME AND RESULTS OF THIS RESEARCH?

## APPENDIX B

### Executive Housekeeper Questionnaire and Results

**EXECUTIVE HOUSEKEEPER QUESTIONNAIRE  
RIT THESIS RESEARCH**

**WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE THINGS YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR HOUSEKEEPING STAFF/DEPARTMENT?**

**WHAT THREE THINGS DO YOU LIKE THE LEAST ABOUT YOUR HOUSEKEEPING STAFF/DEPARTMENT?**

**HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR HOUSEKEEPING STAFF IS DOING A GOOD JOB?**

**HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR HOUSEKEEPING STAFF IS NOT DOING A GOOD JOB?**

**WHAT PRIORITY SKILLS WOULD YOU LIKE TO INTRODUCE TO YOUR HOUSEKEEPING STAFF TO AID IN THEIR EFFECTIVENESS WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS?**

**WHAT PRIORITY SKILLS SHOULD BE INCREASED IN YOUR PROMOTABLE HOUSEKEEPERS?**

**HOW OFTEN DO YOU HIRE HOUSEKEEPERS?**

**DOES YOUR HOUSEKEEPING ORGANIZATIONAL CHART CONTAIN MANAGEMENT POSITIONS?**

**HOW MANY HOUSEKEEPING MANAGEMENT POSITIONS ARE IN YOUR PROPERTY?**

**IDENTIFY ALL THE HOUSEKEEPING JOB TITLES INCLUDED AT YOUR PROPERTY?**

**HOW OFTEN ARE MANAGEMENT POSITIONS (HOUSEKEEPING) FILLED FROM WITHIN?**

**ON WHAT BASIS DO YOU PROMOTE HOUSEKEEPERS?**

**HOW OFTEN HAVE HOUSEKEEPING MANAGERS LEFT YOUR EMPLOYMENT IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?**

**WHAT TOP SKILLS DOES YOUR HOTEL DESIRE IN PROMOTABLE HOUSEKEEPERS FOR ADVANCEMENT?**

WHICH WAGE RANK DESCRIBES YOUR OVERALL HOUSEKEEPING SALARIES FOR THE YEAR AS COMPARED TO OTHER NON-REVENUE DEPARTMENTS?

PLEASE IDENTIFY THE RACIAL MAKE-UP OF YOUR HOUSEKEEPING STAFF.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW THE OUTCOME AND RESULTS OF THIS RESEARCH?

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THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE FOR STATISTICAL INFORMATION. THEY WILL NOT DISCLOSE YOUR IDENTITY.

WOULD YOU TAKE TRAINING TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR ADDITIONAL PROMOTIONS IN HOUSEKEEPING?

WHAT SKILLS WOULD YOU LIKE TO INCREASE IN YOURSELF?

WHAT IS THE HIGHEST GRADE YOU COMPLETED IN SCHOOL?

WHAT AGE GROUP ARE YOU IN?

ARE YOU: MALE OR FEMALE?

ARE YOU: AFRO-AMERICAN/BLACK, ASIAN, HISPANIC, CAUCASIAN, OTHER?

ARE YOU: MARRIED, SINGLE, A WORKING PARENT?

## APPENDIX C

### Housekeeper Questionnaire and Results

HOUSEKEEPERS QUESTIONNAIRE  
RIT THESIS RESEARCH

HOW MANY WAGE EARNERS (EMPLOYED PERSONS) ARE IN YOUR HOME?

DO YOU LIKE YOUR JOB?

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

WHAT DO YOU LIKE THE LEAST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

HOW MANY YEARS OF HOUSEKEEPING (HOTEL) EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE?

HOW SATISFIED WITH YOUR CURRENT POSITION ARE YOU?

WHAT POSITION WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADVANCE TO?

WOULD YOU TAKE TRAINING TO GET PROMOTED IN HOUSEKEEPING?

WHEN WOULD/COULD YOU TAKE TRAINING?

WHAT IS THE HIGHEST GRADE YOU COMPLETED IN SCHOOL?

WHAT SKILLS WOULD YOU LIKE TO INCREASE IN YOURSELF?

WHAT AGE GROUP ARE YOU IN?

ARE YOU: MALE OR FEMALE?

ARE YOU: AFRO-AMERICAN (BLACK), ASIAN, HISPANIC, WHITE, OTHER?

ARE YOU: MARRIED, SINGLE, A WORKING PARENT?

## APPENDIX D

### Cover Letter



May 25, 1992

Dear:

I am conducting a graduate thesis research investigation regarding housekeeping management position amounts the twenty-seven (27) conference/resort hotels in Virginia Beach.

I am in need of your assistance in gathering primary data about your housekeeping department.

The purpose of the study is to pinpoint the established criteria for upward and lateral promotions in housekeeping as identified by upper and middle management and to investigate the relationship between employee desire, management criteria, and position availability as it influences/impacts housekeeping retention back of the house, employment, and customer service.

The research will involve your opinion as well as that of your housekeeping executives and housekeepers.

Please complete the enclosed survey and return it to me by mail or FAX at 498-5008, on or before Friday. I will phone you in a few days to discuss your property's involvement. At no time will the flow of daily operations be interrupted.